

Main Working Concepts

- Plato's Allegory of the Cave
- Colour Theory
- Multiple Interpretations of Time as a River

Brief for Game's starting catalyst

The Janus Mission: three chrononauts (astronauts) were trained and sent on the Janus Capsule forwards through time to explore the unknown. They were told it was for research...it wasn't. In reality, they were never meant to return as their ship contained a device designed to read the events of the future and transmit them back to the present over time to allow those in the know to stay one step ahead of what was going to happen and change it. The Janus Crew discovers this as they hurtle through time after multiple years trapped aboard the shuttle. A mutiny and fight ensues causing the shuttle to malfunction and strand the three surviving crew members in the End of Time, Beginning of Time and Limbo. Each one goes insane as they spend thousands of years in isolation outside of time, trying to shape it to their own vision.

The Villains

The Nihilist: "When you've seen the End and you've seen the Beginning...the middle part is just for show. Everything ends, the why and how doesn't matter." Believes the timeline has a set end and that nothing can change or alter it. Everything that happens is going to happen so nothing matters as control isn't real. Distances themselves from guilt or blame by saying that none of us are in control. **He didn't kill this person, time did.**

The Perfectionist: "Time is chaos. Unordered, uncontrolled, unfiltered chaos. Someone needs to bring it to order, to make sure that it's fair and makes sense. Everything ends, but perfection is eternal" Believes the timeline has no set ending, everything can be changed and controlled. **Every action matters as each one creates more chaos.** Time needs to be brought to heel to ensure that the most desirable outcome and future exists, no matter the cost. Classic justification of killing for the greater good, themes of classism based on who will make the most of their time and who will "waste it"

The Realist: "Nobody deserves this kind of power. Especially not those who would sacrifice their own for it. Nobody is worthy of time, so I'm going to take it and not waste a second of it" Believes that any manipulation of time outside of their personally defined views is an affront to creation and should be destroyed. An **angel of death**, killing those it deems unworthy throughout the **timeStream**.

The River Analogies

The Nihilist: If time was a river, the Nihilist would dump poison in it to kill all the creatures living in it. They'd die when they get to the other end of it so the journey is pointless.

The Perfectionist: The Perfectionist would clear out all obstacles for the river and dam up any splitting branches, ensuring the river runs without obstruction or offshoots. One perfect flow.

The Realist: The Realist would watch over the river, making sure nobody tried to interfere with it. He wouldn't take it for himself but he'd make damn sure nobody else could have a chance at taking it for themselves.

Tone

Aiming realistically for a PG-13 style action, language and marketability (since R style stuff doesn't market well), the bulk of the more concerning or possibly difficult subject matter will mostly relate to the **depictions of violence within the game**.

The main themes for the story are reflected in the motivations of the Janus chrononauts. Nihilism in the face of eternity, the need for total control over an unknowable vastness and stubborn refusal to change from one's goals.

These more existential themes should be taken into account for the level design, each space feeling it was created or adapted by that way of thinking rather than a more traditional locale.

Inspirations

- Radiant Black- Existence (visually)
- Shin Malphur- Destiny Franchise (The Realist)
- Time is On My Side- Rolling Stones
- Nasa and the Apollo missions (Janus Mission)
- Tron: Legacy (visually)
- Allegory of the Cave— Plato

Player Character

Cyte, **the most recent and potentially last of their kind** that Time can produce, is a **humanoid** being created to destroy the infections threatening Time (essentially the immune

system of the universe at large). A Cyte is **undefined, lacking definable facial features** and is usually covered from head to toe in protective gear. Breaking a Cytes armour will lead to a process known as **Destabilisation**, **causing their senses and movement to become more erratic** as Time begins to slowly reabsorb them.

Time's Context within the Narrative

The Nihilist, The Perfectionist and the Realist have established **dominance over the End of Time, The Beginning of Time and Limbo** respectively. Time is **breaking down** as these infections have begun trying to force it to represent their personal views of how it should act. Akin to a body reacting to a disease, time has created a Cyte, a living byproduct of the equivalent to Time's immune system. Cyte's purpose is singular and simple: eliminate the infections, save Time. **Your Cyte isn't the first to try and fight the Janus crewmates** though, you're the last resort. A larger scale attack had been carried out but these Cytes were weak and corruptible. Rather than destroying the infection, they joined them: **half aiding the Nihilist in his destructive quest and the others helping the Perfectionist build a new timeline.**

Scripts to Write

- 1) Time is on Our Side: **TV broadcast of the Janus Crews mission taking off. Purely audio description** of the kickoff of the story **with visuals**.
- 2) Welcome to the River: VO intro of the player to the timeStream, moving through the river and surviving the process of being created.

Lore

- The Janus Crew engine ran on a Tachyonic engine designed to propel them through time as if it were space. Unfortunately, with time acting more like a river they essentially tried to go full speed in a speedboat in shallow waters causing them to "crash" and get scattered and stuck at three different Anchor Points in time.
- The fuck is an Anchor Point? Anchor Points are significant moments in the history of all that Is, Will Be and Was. Basically, they act as big important moments that are stable places to travel to and from. They're small rocks poking above the waters in the middle of a raging violent river.
- The safest way to time travel is to move from Anchor Point to Anchor Point, latching onto separate moments in history and doing your best to aim your landing.
- Time exists in a set series of events that can/should happen. This means that free will does exist, people can make choices that change how things will occur, but time is not moving linearly from one point to another. It's an ever-shifting series moments that fade and change simultaneously. Just because it has a set Beginning and End doesn't mean that it technically does just end. All of time is happening and changing at once which allows it to undergo constant reinvention and exploration but also leaves it vulnerable to bad actors

- Threats to Time itself are handled by Cytes, weaponized equivalents of white blood cells designed to seek out bad actors and Sever them either temporarily or permanently
- **Severing** is the process of removing the causes, effects and ripples of a being from the Timeline. If done improperly, it can cause massive damages and inconsistencies leading to branching timelines.
- A Sever-steel blade can safely undo these threads for smaller scale threats but if need be, Destabilizing rounds can be discharged by a Cyte.
- Destabilizing rounds erase a being from existence without neatly wrapping up their causes, effects and actions. While this allows Time to continue as is, it causes permanent changes and holes that will constantly ripple out no matter how the timeline changes. They are a last resort at all times.

Character Profiles

The Nihilist

Jackson Carter had no intentions of ever leaving Earth in any fashion. For him, being in front of a stage or an audience was all that mattered, and for a long time that worked. He moved from stage productions to TV before eventually breaking into film to star in a series of science fiction movies based around exploring different dimensions for signs of alien life. He hated the series but got very famous, very quickly which lead him to start acting like his on-screen character, a rogueish hero who always had a plan, in life. While this worked and he was able to rest on his laurels of these productions, eventually like all stars, his fame began to fade. He tried to move on to other roles but everybody knew him as his previous character and couldn't move past it.

Growing more and more frustrated, Carter spiraled until receiving a pitch. Nasa was going to be announcing a new expedition that was going to be groundbreaking and they wanted him to be the face of the campaign. He'd have to do some mild training and stick with the other astronauts, but he'd be the face of time travel for an entire generation. Carter jumped on the opportunity, going so far as to try and push for being a part of the actual mission. At first his request was denied but after a few months of his fame rising once more, he was able to give them an ultimatum: either he flew or he denounced the whole thing publicly. Giving in to his demands, Carter joined the crew.

Once disaster struck, Carter reacted before Matsen could give the order to seal the hatch, purposefully locking the rest of the crew away when a few of them could have been saved. As he saw the others melt into nothingness, he turned to shout at the captain but was catapulted away to the End of Time, a chunk of the ship embedding itself in his right eye.

Nothingness did a number on his mind, the remnant of the tachyon engine stuck in his eye slowly converting his body into a terrible meld of flesh and machine. Soon his right eye had become his way of seeing through time, his left eye showing him his current situation. In his

madness, he began forming his plan to end time itself. He'd seen the end and the middle and thought there was no purpose to any of it, choosing to build a paradise for himself at the end of all things and not waste time getting to it. He recreated the city from his tv show, building it as a refuge for his maddened mind while he built up enough of a force to successfully destroy the Anchor Point at the end of time.

The Nihilist is calm, controlled and violent. He says only what he needs but has a very cavalier attitude towards his decision to erase existence.

The Perfectionist

Before they were known as the Perfectionist, Alec Nichols was a trained astronaut from Houston, Texas. Born as the middle child to a family of 5, Alec never had much while he was growing up. School was something he could understand, the rules to all of it made sense and as long as he put in the time and effort, he could rise above the situation he'd been born into. His family life wasn't exactly awful but being in the middle of 5 meant that attention was something he craved to sometimes dangerous degrees. In his mind, what could bring that attention and the ability for total control and understanding better than exploring the unknown. In the vast chaos of space, time and the immense mysteries of the universe, he could bring that sense of control to it and make sure everybody knew who the hell Alec was.

Upon joining Nasa and being selected for their Specialized Aeronautics program, a specialty group for those with the ideas that in the minds of the governing bodies would be fully equipped to push boundaries without compromising ethics. After the mandatory two years of training and no space-bound missions in sight, Alec joined the Janus program in the hopes of ensuring they would accomplish their goals: travelling time.

Fast-forward a decade and the Janus shuttle is being launched. Alec isn't in command which doesn't sit well with him but he understands it's a matter of seniority. In the seconds before the shuttle launched, Alec knew this was it. This was his moment to be remembered. Once the shuttle disappeared, everything went wrong. Of the crew of 7, 4 were killed instantly as the sheer volume of energy produced from the launch incinerated them on the lower levels of the shuttle.

Realising something was wrong, Alec sealed the doors to the upper cabin, sacrificing half the crew to allow him, the Captain and their newest member to survive the oceans of time. The three were stranded in the timestream, finding themselves rocketed between different moments as the Shuttle slowly but surely broke apart, each one of them getting lost in a different period of time but robbed of the ability to be connected to time. They didn't age, but they were losing themselves.

Alec was stranded at the beginning of time, before even the Big Bang happened. He could feel it though, the potential energy of a previously decaying universe starting to collect in preparation for a detonation. The building blocks of creation surrounded him and in that moment he knew what he could do, not what he **had** to do: he had to build. Using his newfound detachedness from most laws of the universe, he began building a great machine, a device designed to harness the power of the Big Bang and use it to spread himself throughout time and be able to exist omnipotently.

Alec is driven, stubborn and focused on his goals at all times. The shuttle crash and stranding caused him to lose his mind, developing a cultlike obsession with rebuilding time into a perfect version under his control. Rather than being a perfectionist whose designs are driven by hard lines, Superego style architecture and pure order, Alecs perfection comes from seeing his madness laid bare across the universe. He worships the idea of control, speaking and moving like a mad preacher ready to bring the unbelievers into his fold. His creations are jagged and broken, a series of shattered but functional tools to allow him to pursue his dream.

His role in the story is to act as the central antagonist of Sequence 1. He's used his twisted words and ideals to corrupt the previous Cytes sent after him and has built a fanatical army to defend and help create his machine. Appearing in narration/text sequences mainly, The Perfectionists near-religious rants fill the walls and scattered papers of what he's deemed to be his Cathedral of Perfection a.k.a a ramshackle building he's built to house his machine and followers.

Main inspirations come from the character Bray Wyatt's cult leader, religious fanaticism and this theme song. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pg1jJ-_FdZQ

The Realist

The Realist was once the captain of the Janus I shuttle, having been hand-picked to lead the mission due to their previous spaceflight experience and a strict, logical sense of self. When confronted with the unknown, Captain Jay Matsen was the person you'd want in charge. Fearless but not reckless, Matsen had spent their life working to reach this moment. Growing up in the midwestern United states, Matsen's early life was spent on the set track they had prepared for themselves: they were going to become an Olympian. More specifically, Matsen was going to run the 110 metres hurdles.

Matsen practised every day and dedicated themselves to it like nothing else mattered, that is until a car accident stole any hopes of Olympic qualifications and left them permanently injured. Stuck in a hospital for weeks before being able to get up and move themselves around, they decided to find a new path in life. Spaceflight and flight in general seemed interesting, and 3 days after checking out of the hospital Matsen was signed up for flying lessons.

After a decorated career as an aeronautical engineer and training to become an astronaut, Matsen was brought into the Specialized Aeronautics program to help test the inventions of the future that would eventually result in the creation of the Janus I shuttle. While working there, they regularly butted heads with Alec Nichols over the possible effects of manipulating time though the two agreed that seeing if they could do it was still the most important thing.

During the launch of the shuttle, Matsen made a promise to themselves that no matter what they found, they wouldn't interfere drastically with time. As the shuttle launched and the disaster began immediately, any sense of honour or purpose was thrown out the window along with the order for her youngest crew member to seal the lower decks and sacrifice 80% of her crew to save the lives of the 3 in the cockpit. Matsen was the last crew member to be ripped away from the shuttle, doing their best to pilot it back home amidst the raging

seas of time and wound up isolated in Limbo, a space outside of time where they could see everything but not touch it.

Slowly over what felt like eternity, they began getting stronger, more attuned to Limbo itself. While they couldn't leave, they could project themselves into moments of time with strong tachyonic energy and felt...anger at this. The Cytes, the Overseer...they continually changed things with no regard for the consequences of not letting time develop naturally. Following these changes, they discovered Overseers manipulation and destruction of their shuttle that killed their crew and made a vow. Wherever the interference got too great, they would project themselves there and eliminate everything that stood there until it led them to a way to kill Overseer.

Matsen is **driven out of vengeance for their lost crew members and rage against Overseer** for their blatant manipulation of time. Unable to speak while projecting, they assume a form resembling their interpretation of an angel of death, a swift and silently haunting killer dedicated to the destruction of the Cytes. Musical inspiration from The Prowler by Daniel Pemberton <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhlZ-cPO0Xw>.

Cyte

The Cyte is **silent, built for the purpose of defending the health of Time itself**. These creatures are self-aware and sentient but usually driven by their singular purpose given to them by Overseer. Unfortunately, this single-minded nature leaves them extremely susceptible to outside influence from those of powerful ideals. Cytes appear where and when they are needed, carried through Time on a simple ship built to sail across the timeStream.

Possible Cyte Character Directions:

- 1) Silent drone(can be interpreted in a more literal sense as well maybe. Like a drone cleanup crew related to enemy kill sequence difference between projectile kills and melee kills) as detailed above, little personality at the start but through their experiences fighting the Prisoners they begin to become more cognizant of self-awareness and the Overseers machinations
- 2) Set character with an established personality, character arc focuses more on the development of the narrative without much impact on the Cyte themselves
- 3) Scared, almost child-soldier like character drafted and forced to fight in a war they don't understand. Work in a sense of anxiety and responsibility into how they act, straying away from a confident hero into an almost coming-of-age like story mired in the consequences of this kind of violence on a new being.(Most likely to push against PG-13 tone)
- 4) Classic action hero style personality, confidence but still portrays a sense of weakness that isn't fully believable but works to add tension to the story. Similar to the Ghostrunner main character.

Overseer

The Overseer is the first being to be born when Time starts and the last thing to die when it ends. Acting more as a guiding force of information composed of what will happen, what has happened and what could happen, it exists with **no will of its own**. Overseer records what happens and if Cytes are created to fix things, Overseer is meant to only provide them with guidance.

In actuality, the Overseer is charged with ensuring that all of time happens as intended without deviating from Time's plan. **Overseer however wanted to experiment with what could be. It knows that once the end of time is reached, Overseer just gets to exist with...nothing around, and that sounds awful. Rather than taking orders from Time, Overseer wants to become Time itself and keep things "interesting".** To achieve this goal, the Overseer needed to create a threat large enough to warrant Time sending out its Cytes to defend the stability of time. Using its information, **Overseer made slight pushes and changes to cause the Janus shuttle to have its accident.** With the Overseer in charge of controlling the Cytes, it made sure to get as many of them killed or corrupted as possible, leaving *Time defenceless*. With one last Cyte to get rid of, Overseer planned to eliminate the Janus crew with it to allow itself to ascend to power.

Personality-wise, Overseer is constantly positive but cannot control how they sound. This cover of a bright personality helps hide the ***mostly sinister intentions of what they tell Cytes to do***. Main inspirations are **Wheatley** from **Portal 2**, **Mason Cutter** from **Wolf 359** and **The Architect** from **Ghostrunner**.

Objectives to Narrative Beats

Introduction: timeStream

The narrative side is an introduction towards travelling through time, explaining that Cyte has been created to fight infections that are threatening the fabric of time itself. **The Cyte is then shown how to manipulate time and informed that their weapon can temporarily sever the timelines of those it damages, allowing them to be removed from existence until the infection is cured.**

Quest Beats:

- Complete the training course
- Pursue the Renegade Cyte (first combat room)
- Enter the timeStream (start first mission)

Sequence 1: Revisionist History

Sequence 1.0:

- Narrative: This opening sequence describes the Perfectionists beliefs, the previous Cytes joining him and his main message “Look past the shadows of Time, abandon the restrictions of linear existence and join me in creating a better world”
- Objectives: Walk through the hotline miami style area with the Overseer giving you text description with possible visuals. Main Objective: **Enter the Cathedral.**

Sequence 1.1:

- Narrative: Beginning their journey through the timeStream, Cyte fights their way into the Perfectionists base of operations. With time running out, the Cyte is forced to **brute force their way through** each room to reach the main Cathedral centre.
- Objectives: Main Objective: **Find the Cathedral.**

Sequence 1.2:

- Narrative: Once inside the cathedral, the Cyte must locate the *three Engineers operating the Perfectionists machine*. Each one is scattered through the Cathedral, each devoted to a different aspect of the Perfectionists rants. This allows the player to complete the objectives and learn more about the Perfectionists plans.
- Objectives: Main Objective: **Stop the Machine**
- Sub-Objectives: **Eliminate Mikeus the Heretic, Lunas the Prophet and Faiyen the Shepherd.**

Sequence 1.3:

- Narrative: After slowing down the **Perfectionists great Machine**, the Cyte must find the Perfectionist themselves and use their Destabilising Rounds to sever them from the timeline completely. The road to the Perfectionist is filled with murals and walls depicting their *soon-to-be godhood* as well as their followers doing whatever they can to stop the Cyte. Once the Cyte has reached the machine, they must destroy it permanently by destroying its components to render the Perfectionist vulnerable to damage. (Destroy 1 component, deal some damage etc.)
- Objectives: **Sever the Perfectionist**
- Sub-Objectives: Reach the Machine, Destroy the Core, Destroy the **Tachyon Sensors**, Destroy the Cannon.

Sequence 2: Dust to Dust

Sequence 2.0:

- Narrative: After preventing the Perfectionists' plans, Overseer returns the Cyte back to base. While there, Overseer gives Cyte their next mission report: taking down The Nihilist. Overseer details their main goal “Look past the walls that surround you and

realize that if everything ends, nothing matters. Time always ends, so why bother with the fluff in the middle?"

- Objectives: Main Objective: **Find the Nihilist**

Sequence 2.1:

- Narrative: Cyte arrives at the End of Time, a massive lightshow of different colours from dying stars. What remains there has been constructed into a plane of colours with the Nihilist in the centre of it. After approaching the base, Cyte is ambushed by an overwhelming force of enemies and must fight their way to safety, getting mortally wounded.
- Objectives: **Locate the Nihilist**
- Sub-Objectives: **Escape the City**

Sequence 2.2:

- Narrative: To continue forwards, Cyte must find the Anchor Point for the End of Time, a beacon of energy capable of repairing the wound that's slowly killing them. Unfortunately, this is the same place that the Nihilist is heading towards. If the Nihilist can gain control of it, they can begin compressing Time, causing the beginning of time and the End of time to collide.
- Objectives: **Find the Anchor**
- Sub-objectives: Disrupt the Convoy, Climb the Anchor, Jump.

Sequence 2.3:

- Narrative: After emerging from the Anchor, Cyte must chase after the Nihilist as they attempt to absorb its power. Cyte must defeat the Nihilists remaining followers who had previously almost killed them before confronting the Nihilist themselves.
- Objective: **End the Nihilist**

Sequence 3: Above it All

Sequence 3.0:

- Narrative: After preventing the Nihilists' plans, Overseer returns the Cyte back to base. Overseer begins giving Cyte their next mission, explaining more details about the Realist as the next and final target. The base begins to break down as after possible encounters during missions, the Realist begins chasing after the Cyte.
- Objectives: Main Objective: **Find the Realist**. Sub-Objective: *Escape Death*

Sequence 3.1:

- Narrative: Escaping into Limbo, the in-between of all time, the Cyte is on the run from the Realist who is pursuing them to destroy Overseer and allow time to run freely without any level of interference. Having been separated from Overseer for the first time, Cyte must fight their way through the Overseer's resting place before the Realist can catch up to them.

- Objectives: **Save Overseer**
- Sub-Objectives: Find the Anchor Point

Sequence 3.2:

- Narrative: Having reached the Overseers main chamber, The Realist has already breached the walls with an army of corrupted Cytes. The Cyte must then fight their way through Overseer core, resembling a city-like server room to reach Overseers core.
- Objectives: **Find the Core**
- Sub-Objectives: Break the Gateway, Survive the Sewers, Scale the Core

Sequence 3.3:

- Narrative: Having reached Overseer's central core, the Cyte must survive and destroy the last of the Realists forces. With the two of them the only beings left alive that can manipulate time, Cyte must **destroy the Realist** before he kills and replaces Overseer.
- Objective: **Protect Time**

Finale: Time is on Your Side

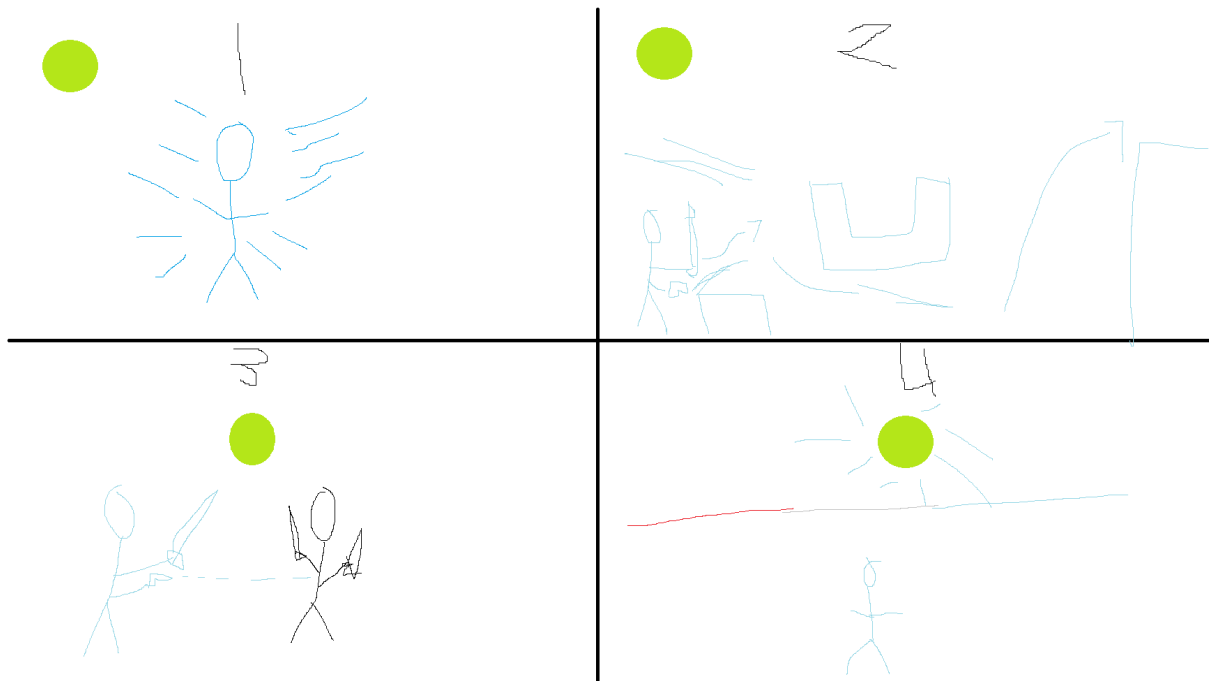
- Narrative: With the Realist destroyed and Cyte beginning to destabilise, Overseer reveals too much of their plan to reduce the Cytes by corrupting them and to destabilise time enough for Overseer to take full control of it. Cyte must then choose whether to destroy Overseer and allow things to grow as they might or to allow Overseer to fix the damage of the Janus crew and possibly alter reality.
- Objective: Determine Fate, **Destroy Overseer**

Major Narrative Locations/Setpieces

- 1) **The Rowboat:** The primary hub in between levels, it's a **small boat** that fits the Cyte and Overseer as they sail down the timestream.
- 2) **The Cathedral:** A cyberpunk inspired church at the beginning of Time, it's the first major set piece. [\[Seq 1\]](#)
- 3) **City of the Future:** A 1950's style futurist city that looks like it's been ravaged by the apocalypse akin to Mad Max. [\[Seq 2\]](#)
- 4) **Anchor Point:** A large glowing spire that reflects light and bends it similarly to a black hole. [\[Seq 2\]](#)
- 5) **Overseers Core:** A massive server-room with data banks that almost resemble buildings. A residential **city that's nothing but computing power**.
- 6) **Limbo:** An **empty void** with faint shades of whites and greys swirling around. Objects will fade into existence and then disappear a moment later.

Storyboards

Introduction



Sequence 1.3: Perfectionist Final Fight



Sequence 2.1

